

Short Talk With the Boys.

BY M. QUAD.

"Come, now, let me ask you a few

questions. What is a locomotive?"

"Why, it's a machine which draws the

cars."

"What is an engine?"

"Well, it's another machine to run

mills, boats, factories, etc."

"How wide is a railroad track?"

"Oh, five or six feet."

"What is the weight of a flat car?"

"Unknown."

"What is the cost of an ordinary pas-

senger coach?"

"Never heard."

"Ah, my lad! I just wish I was about

14 years old, and had the chances you

are throwing away."

"What could you do?"

"Why, I'd post myself. For one thing

I'd walk down to the depot and when a

locomotive brought in its train and went

off to the round-house to be wiped up,

I'd follow it and find out how it was

made. I'd have a peep at every lever

and crank and cog and wheel and rod,

and I'd know why and how steam exerted its

power. I'd satisfy myself why that

boiler mounted on wheels was able to

pull and push. When I left the round-

house I'd go to a factory and overhaul a

stationary engine and when I was

done I'd get hold of some railroad man

and pump him until I was posted even as

to the quantity of oil used to run a

locomotive a hundred miles."

"Why, what good would all that do

me?"

"Why? Because a born fool has just

as good eyes as you have. He sees a

train coming down the track, and he

realizes that it is a train. That is all

he knows. I realize, although you have every

chance to know more. I don't say that it

will be money in your pocket to know these

things, but it will be a satisfaction to you

which money cannot buy. You never

heard of the great island, but its

location, number, products, area,

etc., are given in geography to post you

and broaden your mind."

"One of the greatest business of the

age is railroading. Go down to the Union

depot and count the trains going out and

coming in for an hour and you will be

amazed. Every one leaves on time—

every one comes in almost to the minute,

barring accident. If it were not so the

business of the entire country would

soon fall into confusion. The train which

is due in Chicago at 8 o'clock a. m., or

in Buffalo at noon, or in Cincinnati at

2 p. m., must be there to the minute, or

nothing breaks down. Passengers expect

it—the postoffice officials, banks, mer-

chants—everybody expects it, and all

business arrangements are made accord-

ingly."

"Have you any idea of the millions of

money required to build, equip and run

a railroad? I have seen the extent of the

work, and I have seen the extent of the

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They Didn't Fight.

A veteran newsdealer of Washington

gives the following about a duel which

was once anticipated between Martin

Van Buren and Henry Clay: It was be-

fore Van Buren was elected to the Presi-

dency—when both he and Clay were in

the Senate. One day he and Mr. Clay

had some hot words in debate, and the

word went forth among Washington gos-

sips that a duel would be the result.

That night the matter was discussed over

tea tables and in the hotels, and it was

expected that the duel would take place

the next morning. Some even went so

far as to give the names of the seconds,

and the place of meeting.

When the Senate opened the next day

there was a great crowd at the Capitol.

All the galleries were filled and every

eye was strained in watching the door

and seats of Clay and Van Buren. As

the President's gavel fell neither was

present, and the spectators were sure that

the duel was going off. A moment later,

however, Mr. Clay came in and took his

seat, the chaplain prayed, and still Van

Buren was absent. As the amen was

said, Mr. Clay arose, turned slowly

around, and walked down the aisle. As

he did so, Van Buren, dressed in his

usual white duck suit, entered the door.

The galleries held their breath. Mr. Van

Buren reaching out his hand, said: "How

do you do, Mr. Clay?" and Mr. Clay

replied: "Very well, Mr. Van Buren;

and you look well, too. I wish

you were as white on the inside as you

appear to be on the outside." The audi-

ence at this saw there was to be no duel,

and the galleries were cleared at once.

The meeting had been arranged by Clay

and Van Buren, in order to show the

people there was nothing in the rumor.

—The longest word in the dictionary

is "disproportionableness."